

Testimony in Opposition of Bill #5268, sponsored by Rep Gail Hamm, on behalf of the Princess Pocotopaug Taxing District.

First, I think it is only fair that the history of how this special legislation came to be , be shared with all present.

The Princess Pocotopaug Taxing District was found to be operating illegally, with many violations, one of which being the way they "tax" their members. This district was formed in 1961, and has yet to ever be complaint with the Connecticut General Statute under which it was formed. It has operated all of these years, 49 years, improperly. They have never taxed a mil rate as they were supposed to do, per Connecticut General Statutes, and the Law. They have always charged a flat fee, like an association. When the district was told that one of the components in becoming legal was that they needed to start taxing properly to be in compliance and hopefully ward off lawsuits from the residents, there were a few people, who have been active, or are currently active, in some capacity at one time or another on the Board , who did not want to be taxed a mil rate based on assessed value because they would be paying more than others. It was these very people that approached Rep. Hamm and asked her to draft a bill so that they could get around this, thus Bill 5268 came to life.

I oppose this for a for a few reasons which I will outline below.

1. This bill will affect all of the Special Taxing Districts Statewide if it passes. Any Board or group of members per section C of proposed legislation, may invoke this at anytime. This may not be the peoples will, as a larger percent of most residents in these districts are not paying the highest tax, those along the lakefront are and the rest of the taxpayers away from the lake pay less in tax dollars. Basically , a larger percent of homes in most districts are NOT paying the higher taxes and I do not think they would be in favor of this option being available . As we all know, these districts taxes are based on assessed values and a mil rate is set each year.
2. This will cause unnecessary discord, dissent, and chaos in these districts, not to mention putting their budgets at risk.
3. As is common in many of these districts, a majority of the residents do NOT turn out for the meetings, and would miss the opportunity to stop their board from passing this.
4. If The Princess Pocotopaug District would like to charge a flat fee, there is an option for us, it is called being an Association, which we already have in place and legally correct.
5. Who are we, a 134 homeowners, in a small district, to upset the applecart of 250 or so other districts in this state because we have a few individuals that do not want to abide by a law that has served this State and the Special Districts within it well for hundreds of years? I cannot support such a self serving bill.
6. You cannot have the strong arm of the district yet pay the low dues of an association .

7. The 24 hour option at the end of proposed section C to the Statute is absurd, at any time a group can petition the clerk to call a vote to change their taxing method, and many members again, would not have the opportunity to attend such vote or meeting.
8. I am a resident of this Princess Pocotopaug District and I oppose this because of the unfairness of it, and the problems that it will cause other districts in this state. We have a long way to go, and many other things to correct to be a proper and legal district, I am ashamed and embarrassed that some of our members think this is where to start, simply because they don't want to pay taxes more than their neighbor, like the other 299 Districts in our State do. It is 2010, The Boston Tea Party was over a long long time ago.

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